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Venezuela: Caracas Governor Praises Armed Forces, Police

PA0402140492 Caracas Venezolana de Television Network in Spanish
1200 GMT 4 Feb 92

[Interview with Caracas Governor Antonio Ledezma by unidentified reporters in Caracas on 4 February -- live]

[Text] [Reporter] Governor, what is the situation in the capital city?

[Ledezma] It is under control. I came to my office as soon as I heard the news; that was between 0000 and 0100. I have been here with the Metropolitan Police confronting this situation. The people have united thanks to democracy, which is a system we must preserve, and to our Armed Forces, the soldiers loyal to popular sovereignty and the letter and spirit of our Constitution who have displayed civic pride, bravery, and respect for these sacred principles. I believe this regrettable experience has brought Venezuela together to protect the democratic system.

[Reporter] Governor, there are reports to the effect that there are problems within the Metropolitan Police in Cotiza. Is this true?

[Ledezma] At this moment I can inform the people of Caracas and all of Venezuela that a lieutenant from the paratrooper group surrendered with a group of soldiers and that he is in the custody of the military intelligence directorate.

[Reporter] It has been announced that there were many casualties among the Municipal Police in Sucre District, who upon learning of the coup attempt came to La Casona to defend the freedom of the facility. What is your opinion of this report? Is it true? How many were killed?

[Ledezma] I do not have any information on casualties. I am aware that this body of policemen, as well as other men and women from the police force, cooperated. They joined together to defend democracy.

[Reporter] What do you believe will happen in the next few hours? Will the situation be brought totally under control throughout the country?

[Ledezma] We are about to control the situation. The Metropolitan Police and the National Guard are patrolling the streets of Caracas, traffic is normal, and the people are breathing freely now because, although the conflict is still recent, the Armed Forces and police forces have acted assertively.

[Reporter] Are there special instructions for the people? Reports have it that the Caracas subway is not operating. Is there any

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transportation? What is the situation?

[Ledezma] The people must help us by being good citizens and by displaying their loyalty to democracy. With this good behavior, they will contribute to the struggle we are all waging to prevent a seditious group, encouraged by ulterior motives, from destroying this democratic project attained through the effort and blood of the generation that founded the system.

[Reporter] Are there services, Mr. Governor? Is there any transportation?

[Ledezma] Yes, and transportation will increase as the day progresses.

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